

## Message Text

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14

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-11 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00

SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 COME-00 EB-07 LAB-04 SIL-01

SAJ-01 SAM-01 /078 W

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O R 271823Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4762

INFO AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY OSLO

USMISSION NATO

USMISSION GENEVA

USEC BRUSSELS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, SP

SUBJ: LABOR UNREST RESULTS IN WORKER DEATH AND FIRST SIGNIFICANT  
CLASHES WITH POLICE

REF: MADRID 1257

SUMMARY: INCREASED LABOR UNREST THIS PAST WEEK INCLUDED: (A)  
DEATH OF WORKER KILLED BY POLICE IN AFTERMATH OF LABOR DEMONSTRATION  
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TION IN ELDA; (B) SIGNIFICANT CLASHES OF STRIKING CONSTRUCTION

WORKERS WITH POLICE IN BARCELONA; (C) SUBSTANTIAL STRIKE ACTIVITY IN CERTAIN OTHER CITIES; AND (D) TRUCK DRIVERS STRIKE IN OTHERWISE QUIET MADRID. MOST DISTURBING ASPECT OF CURRENT STRIKE SCENE IS FIRST SIGNS OF VIOLENCE.  
END SUMMARY.

1. ON FEB 26, THERE WERE SIGNIFICANT CLASHES IN BARCELONA BETWEEN STRIKING CONSTRUCTION WORKERS AND POLICE. U.S. CONGEN REPORTS THAT 5,000 BARCELONA CONSTRUCTION WORKERS, ON STRIKE OVER DEMANDS FOR NEW CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS, GATHERED OUTSIDE PROVINCIAL SSO HEADQUARTERS AND WERE JOINED BY A FEW THOUSAND ADDITIONAL WORKERS. ASSEMBLY TOOK MORE MENACING TURN WITH STRIKERS APPARENTLY TRYING TO PROVOKE A CONFRONTATION WITH POLICE BY BLOCKING TRAFFIC, CHANTING SLOGANS, AND SPREADING INTO NEARBY STREETS. AFTER FAILING TO DISPERSE WORKERS, POLICE TURNED WATER CANNON ON THEM. DEMONSTRATORS THEN CLASHED WITH POLICE, WHO CHARGED, SHOT RUBBER BULLETS, USED TEAR GAS AND BROKE IT UP. SEVERAL PERSONS REPORTEDLY INJURED. OUR AMCONGEN REPORTS THAT ABOUT NOON TODAY CONSTRUCTION WORKERS ONCE AGAIN CONGREGATED OUTSIDE SSO HEADQUARTERS AND THAT ANOTHER STIFF CLASH OF POLICE, NOW OVER, WITH AN ESTIMATED COUPLE THOUSAND STRIKING WORKERS, WHO EVEN UNSUCCESSFULLY ATTEMPTED TO ERECT A BARRICADE, TOOK PLACE.

2. EVEN MORE SERIOUS LABOR-RELATED INCIDENT TOOK PLACE TWO DAYS EARLIER IN ELDA, A CENTER OF SHOE INDUSTRY IN ALICANTE PROVINCE, WHERE A YOUNG OFFICE CLERK WAS KILLED BY POLICE FOLLOWING A WORKER DEMONSTRATION. ACCORDING GOVT VERSION, A POLICE CAR RETURNING FROM DEMONSTRATION WAS ATTACKED AND STONED BY DEMONSTRATORS AND STRIKERS, POLICE ALLEGEDLY HEARD SHOTS BEING FIRED FROM CROWD AND POLICE IN CAR WERE OBLIGED TO FIRE WARNING SHOTS, ACCIDENTALLY KILLING A WORKER.

3. ELSEWHERE MUCH STRIKE ACTIVITY, USUALLY RESULTING FROM ECONOMIC OR LABOR GRIEVANCES OF ONE FORM OR ANOTHER, HAS OCCURRED, IN SOME AREAS ALSO ACCOMPANIED BY CLASHES WITH POLICE. PRINCIPAL AREAS WERE (A) SEVILLE, WHERE A BUS STRIKE A WEEK AGO CAUSED GOVT TO MILITARIZE BUS DRIVERS; (B) VIGO; (C) BILBAO; AND (D) SABADELL, ONE OF PRINCIPAL CATALAN CENTERS, WHICH HAS BEEN PLAGUED IN RECENT DAYS BY VIRTUAL GENERAL STRIKE OF 45,000 LOCAL TEXTILE, CONSTRUCTION, AND METAL WORKERS.  
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4. MADRID HAS REMAINED RELATIVELY QUIET. NEVERTHELESS A TRUCK STRIKE WHICH BROKE OUT EARLY THIS WEEK HAS TIED UP MOST OF TRUCKS WHICH DAILY BRING IN PRODUCE AND GOODS TO CITY, AND HAS NOW SPREAD TO VARIOUS OTHER PROVINCES, REPORTEDLY AFFECTING SOME 50,000 TRUCKS. IN THIS CASE, 70 PERCENT OF STRIKING TRUCK DRIVERS ARE OWNAR-OPERATORS, THEIR MOOVATION IS TO FORCE GOVT TO REMOVE CERTAIN LICENSE FEES AND ROAD TAXES LEVIED ON TRUCK

TRANSPORT AS WELL AS TO AUTHORIZE AN INCREASE IN TRUCK FREIGHT FEES.

5. COMMENT: MOST DISTURBING ASPECT OF CURRENT SITUATION IS THESE FIRST SIGNS OF VIOLENCE. DEATH RELATED TO LABOR MANIFESTATIONS IN ELDA IS FIRST DEATH OF A WORKER IN SPAIN IN LABOR DISPUTE IN OVER TWO YEARS. THERE APPEARS TO BE A NEW ELEMENT OF DIRECT PROVOCATION OF POLICE AND SECURITY FORCES BY SOME WORKERS AS WELL AS A CORRESPONDING INCREASE IN THE USE OF FORCE ON THE PART OF THE POLICE, WHO SINCE FRANCO'S DEATH HAVE BEEN ACTING WITH REMARKABLE RESTRAINT THROUGHOUT SPAIN. (ONE OBSERVER HAS COMMENTED THAT HE WAS SURPRISED AT THE WORKER DEATH IN ELDA BECAUSE HE THOUGHT POLICE NO LONGER HAD LIVE AMMUNITION DURING DEMONSTRATIONS AND WERE NOW ONLY USING RUBBER BULLETS). NONETHELESS VIOLENCE ON THE LABOR SCENE IS QUITE LIMITED AND EVEN AS NEW STRIKES OCCUR OTHERS ARE BEING SETTLED.  
STABLER

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## Message Attributes

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